

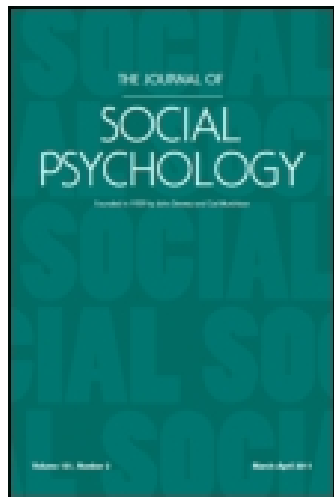
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## SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL HYPOTHESES ON NAZI GERMANY: II\*

*New York City*

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PAUL KECSKEMETI AND NATHAN LEITES

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### A. HARDNESS AND SOFTNESS

#### 1. *The "Zusammenbruch" Syndrom*

*a. The two reaction images.* A widespread valuation in German culture extolled "hardness" (as a symptom of "strength") and repudiated "softness" (as a symptom of "weakness").

By "hardness" is meant a readiness to accept extreme deprivations in order to avoid being subdued by an enemy, or in order to satisfy authority demands. These two attitudes are closely related to each other: to "give in" is contrary to the norm sponsored by authority. The deprivations accepted for the sake of continued resistance may have been greater than those which the enemy was expected to impose after surrender; the idea of surrender aroused intense anxiety, not only because the victorious enemy would impose deprivations on the self, but because admitting defeat, i.e., accepting the rôle of the weaker party, appeared intolerable in itself. Hardness in accepting deprivations, whether as a concomitant of fighting an enemy or of obeying other authority injunctions, was on the other hand a source of heightened self-esteem as well as diminished anxiety and guilt. In addition, it was often taken to be a guarantee of future indulgences (of which one has shown oneself "worthy"). Softness was a source of lowered self-esteem, heightened anxiety and guilt, and fraught with threats of being punished by extreme deprivations.

As to hardness in resistance, it was during Germany's recent history comparatively easy—as is well known—to induce many Germans to live up to this demand. As the deprivations imposed by the Second War grew in intensity, and pessimism about its outcome deepened, Nazi propaganda increased its efforts to capitalize on the tendencies towards "hardness" described above. The consequences of a "moment of weakness" were presented in the direct light. The sacrifices imposed by the war were typically presented as "tests" ("Nervenproben" or "Belastungsproben"). The individual was

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given a choice between what we might call a "positive performance" ("saving" himself and his group, etc.) and a "negative performance" (in which case he would "give himself up" and also his group). A frequent implication—related to omnipotence phantasies (cf. Chapter 19) was that Germans can be beaten only "by themselves," i.e., by an act of "treason" against themselves. Should they commit this "crime," they would "deserve" defeat with all its dire consequences (cf. Hitler's November 8, 1943 speech). This way of presenting things was presumably designed to strengthen already close association between "strength" and "morality" on the one hand, and "weakness" and "immorality" on the other.

Typical symbols about the "negative" and the "positive" performance reveal intense fears of performing negatively and the largely reaction-formative nature of the "positive performance" in idea and act. For instance, the positive performance was often presented as the negation of the negative performance. Similar inferences may be drawn from frequent protestations that one will "never" surrender (affirmations which are presumably also intended to undo past negative performances). Sometimes, fears of surrender were consciously expressed and focussed upon a "weak" sector in the German people or character. Thus the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* on September 11, 1944, denounced in typical vein "the usual German tendency towards self-surrender out of . . . weakness." The same paper on August 20, 1944, wrote: "Frequently and not without justification have we been described as a people without strength of character. But this time we will not give in." (This idea is, of course, merely a variant of the "Germans can be beaten only by Germans" theme: all the Germans need to win any war is "strength of character"; whenever they lost in the past, it was because they were lacking in this.)

It is consistent with this "narcissistic" tendency that in the standard elaborations of the hardness-softness variable in German culture very little attention was focussed on the enemy; the spotlight was on the reactions of Germans.

The major epithets characterizing the positive and negative performances were, as already implied, "hard" and "soft," "strong" and "weak." On the one hand, there is "stark sein," "innere Stärke," "Charakterstärke," "Charakterfestigkeit"; on the other hand, "schwach werden," "Schwächlichkeit," "Charakterschwäche." Both pairs of opposites (also "straff" and "schlapp") were frequently used in classifying all kinds of things; acts of aggression, of course, appeared as "hard," while love and benevolence tendencies, and objects associated with them, were presented as "soft." Thus

"Kultur" was often associated with "softness." Heavy metals were favorite incarnations of "hardness": "eiserne Nerven haben," "das eiserne Herz" (a Goebbels' formula). Hitler asked the Hitler youth to be, among other things, "hart wie Kruppstahl." (The anti-Nazi organization sponsored by the Social Democrats in the last period of the Weimar regime called itself "Eiserne Front.") A closely related pair of opposites was "Nachgiebigkeit—Unnachgiebigkeit," with the positive value accent on the latter.

The positive performance was pictured as one which maintains *intact* the person or group by resisting enemy forces bent upon destroying its structure. The negative performance was perceived correspondingly as resulting in the person's or the group's disintegration. Characteristic expressions referring to the positive performance were: Bestehen, beharren, standhalten, durchhalten, ungebrochen sein. On the other hand, expressions characterizing a disposition towards the negative performance stressed the aspect of disintegration: zersetzt, zermürbt. To give in to pressure was spoken of as "sich breitschlagen lassen." The critical test itself was sometimes referred to as a "Zerreissprobe."

A prominent group of expressions stressed *firmness* against onrushing hostile forces: Festigkeit, Festbleiben; fest wie ein Fels im Meer; this contrasts with "ins Wanken geraten," as the beginning of the negative performance. A closely related group of much used metaphors referred to *erectness* of position in warding off enemy forces seeking to hurl one to the ground: in allen Stürmen aufrecht, sich nicht klein kriegen (unterkriegen) lassen, sich nicht niederzwingen lassen, ungebeugt, unbeugsam. Predisposition for the negative performance, on the other hand, is "Rückgratlosigkeit." On the point of yielding, one may "sich aufraffen." The accomplished negative performance is described as "zusammenklappen."

As for the *subjective* side of the positive and negative performance, the typical stereotype was that in the positive performance, the subject retains control over the strong dysphoric affects accompanying deprivation (selbstbeherrschung), while in the negative performance, the subject is overwhelmed by affect or gradually loses its power over it (nur noch ein Nervenbündel sein, Nervenauflöschung, Ruin des Nervensystems, Verlust der Nerven Kraft).

There was a characteristic tendency to regard *all* psychic factors as tending towards the negative performance: thus "menschlich" was closely associated with "Schwäche"; and "Stärke" with "Keine Nerven haben." ("Nerven" sometimes referred to physiological elements as in the phrases mentioned before; and sometimes—as in the phrase just cited—to subjective

components of anxiety.) Control of affect is referred to as "unerschütterliche Ruhe wahren," "grosse innere Ruhe," "Kaltblütigkeit," "Gelassenheit," "souveräne Überlegenheit." There was a tendency to deny anxiety in the vein of "wir Deutsche fürchten Gott und sonst nichts auf der Welt." On the other hand, there is "seelisch aufgelöst sein," "seelisch zugrunde gehen."

In the positive performance, the *expression* of pain is greatly interfered with: "nicht mit der Wimper zucken," "die Zähne zusammenbeissen." On the other hand, the negative performance is characterized by full expression of distress. Thus uninhibited tearfulness characterized the reactions of many World War II German soldiers after they themselves (or their units or superiors) had surrendered. But extreme protesting complaints about deprivations imposed by the enemy were included in the image of the positive performance. (Cf. the larmoyant complaints about the Versailles treaty or Goebbels' lamentations over the persecutions the Nazis were allegedly subjected to under the Weimar regime.) Thus, the rule was: deprivations imposed by one's own authority must be borne with minimum, deprivations imposed by an "enemy" must be reacted to with a maximum of protesting and complaining. As Robert Ley said in Vienna in November, 1944, "if we have to sacrifice and renounce things, we may do so in the full knowledge of the reasons and in the hope of a wonderful future to which we thereby acquire a right; what we cannot bear is that such sacrifices and deprivations should be imposed arbitrarily by an enemy, as a punishment." And the same Ley wrote in the *Angriff* of September 3, 1944, that "we Germans do not complain that our destiny is hard and that it imposes cruel tests and inhuman trials on us; we National Socialists are accustomed to being treated ruthlessly and do not want it otherwise."

As for *overt action* in the "positive performance," it is characterized by extreme perseverance, regardless of the magnitude of the risks (Unentwegtheit, Beharrlichkeit; und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär, es muss uns doch gelingen; trotz allem, Todesverachtung, Todesmut). Courage (Mut) is the central term summarizing all these desiderata. That "Mut" was to a considerable extent reaction-formative against spontaneous "weakness" tendencies, is well illustrated by the "motto" given out at a Nazi party meeting in August of 1944 at Gelsenkirchen by the Deputy Gauleiter Schaller: "Herrgott, lass uns nicht feige werden" (i.e., do not allow us to commit the crime of surrender but maintain us on the road of our duty, that of being "courageous").

In describing the proper attitude in a crisis, Goebbels (in *Front und*

Heimat, quoted by *DNB* on June 5, 1944) mentioned the following four desirable traits: Mut, Entschlossenheit, Kaltblütigkeit, and Verantwortungsfreudigkeit. According to the preceding discussion, it may be assumed that in reality these traits were often lacking and at least just as often reaction-formative when they were not lacking.

We may now discuss some of the presumable major unconscious significances of the positive and negative performance in a crisis.

(These considerations are also largely applicable to the closely associated positive and negative performances in "dishing it out" rather than "taking it," as well as to positive and negative performances in inflicting deprivations upon the self, i.e., "Härte gegen sich selbst" and self-indulgence.)

1. The positive performance is presumably frequently unconsciously an act of father-identification (a "masculine" act), while the negative performance tends to have the significance of a mother-identification (a "feminine" act). If we confront the images of the "positive" and the "negative" performance (as given above) with the child's images of paternal and maternal behavior and demands in the patriarchal family, it will be evident that the "positive" performance shows an affinity with the father and the "negative" performance with the mother. The position acts and values of the father are "strong" and "hard," those of the mother "soft" and "weak." (Apparently, the following family situation was not infrequent in German culture: the father proposes to chastise the male child; the mother is against it, but is too weak and subdued to interfere; hence she absents herself with signs of distress from the scene of the punishment.)

What is the rôle of father and mother identifications in the character type here considered? (a) The typical solution of the oedipal situation presumably involves a superego modelled on the father opposing other aspects of the personality modelled on the mother. (b) The anal-sadistic regression of the compulsive character involves the coexistence of intense active ("masculine," "sadistic") tendencies on the one hand, and intense passive ("feminine") tendencies on the other.

2. The negative performance is presumably unconsciously associated with libidinal oedipal tendencies of the male child towards his mother; thus the intense anxiety connected with these tendencies, and the strong interference against them following the liquidation of the oedipus situation, tend to color the negative performance correspondingly.

3. The negative performance is presumably unconsciously associated with passive homosexual tendencies towards the father which are also related

to identification with the mother. The anxiety and interference directed towards these tendencies then tend to extend to the negative performance.

Many male Germans seem on all three counts thus far mentioned to be anxiously and guiltily aware of strong "feminine" tendencies in themselves to which they oppose a largely reaction-formative "masculinity."

Therefore, "masculinity" often has "duty" character: it has to be striven for, strenuously conquered and defended, rather than simply being given or absent. At first, masculine behavior patterns are inculcated by the father who combats maternal influences which would tend to keep the boy "attached to his mother's apron strings" and make a pampered "Muttersöhnchen" of him. Later, the school and the army take over the task of "making men" out of boys with feminine tendencies. In all these situations, "masculine" behavior is at a premium.

The male German's attitude towards women has often been marked by conscious and unconscious fear, aggression and contempt; the same is true of objects having a "feminine" significance, e.g., the arts (6) characteristically describes the "Prussian aristocracy" as "something masculine and at the same time artistic and cultivated"). These attitudes partly take over the father's "superiority" vis-a-vis the mother, and partly represent reaction-formations against positive tendencies towards the mother. In heterosexual relations, the male partner's attitude has presumably been often characterized by a polarization between sentimentality and brutality.

4. The positive performance is presumably unconsciously an act of obedience to, and desexualized love for, the father. The negative performance, on the other hand, connotes disobedience to, and aggression against, the father. (It may be noted here that in the compulsive character obedience in accepting deprivations sometimes has an unconsciously aggressive significance against authority; e.g., by being obedient "regardless of the consequences," the subject may, with unconscious reproachful demonstrativeness, let things reach the point of complete or partial self-destruction.)

The more severe the deprivational "test" is, the greater will be the temptation of behaving negatively. That a test is a "hard" one means that in many phases of the conflict the enemy turns out to be superior, and forces the self, and the authorities recognized by the self, to bow to his will (e.g., to abandon an important position). In the measure, however, as the (paternal) authority turns out to be weak, the self's unfavorable tendencies towards it will be strengthened; by the same token, favorable tendencies towards the enemy will become stronger. This is implied in the close association of "strength" with "morality" which is typical in the character type involved.



The German domestic situation after Hitler's coming to power in January of 1933 illustrates this point. The more ruthlessly the Nazis dealt with the political organizations of democratic Germany, the more they procured at least the benevolent neutrality of large numbers of their rank-and-file who turned away from their former allegiances—which now appeared “wrong,” because they were weak. This well known example shows how superior strength of a formerly “hostile” power may result in at least partial transfers of allegiance. The behavior of many German soldiers in World War II also displayed this characteristic. In general, their attitude towards their major enemies tended to grow more or less favorable in direct relation to their estimate of these enemies' power. Forecasts of enemy victory were often accompanied by expressions of readiness to transfer allegiance totally, e.g., by emigration. “One should start learning English.” The mechanisms involved were often partially conscious; i.e., the enemy's strength or weakness was expressly acknowledged as a major datum determining the favorableness or unfavorableness of one's attitude towards him. Enemy victories were frequently followed by mellowed feelings. “They can't be as bad as that” (implicitly: “God is with the stronger battalions.”)

As long as these tendencies towards renegadism are not consummated, they provoke strongly reaction-formative counter-tendencies; at the height of the crisis, both antagonistic tendencies reach maximum strength. The counter-tendencies may assume various forms of which the intensely asserted obligation of loyalty to an authority in distress (“*nun erst recht*”) is one. Such loyalty, however, was seldom invoked as the exclusive motive for continued resistance; it was usually coupled with the assertion of the ultimate recovery of superior strength. The prevalent tendency in German culture was to back the winner, and to shun lost causes. Those who fought for lost causes largely did so by mistake.

5. The positive performance may have the unconscious significance of a licit act of anal retention; the negative performance may stand for an illicit act of anal expulsion. (Cf. Chapter 8.) One may recall the drinking ceremonies of students' corporations (*Verbindungen*): a test situation was created in which the positive performance is retention. Certain characteristic terms referring to the positive performance, such as those of the “*Selbstbeherrschung*” group, may have had a partially anal-retentive significance.

6. The positive performance may be accompanied by phantasies of omnipotence. One may recall that certain types of compulsive characters are “indulging in ascetic performances in order . . . to show themselves that they can do it” (18).

7. The positive performance may be accompanied by self-admiration and by conscious or unconscious intent to induce admiration by others. Its "restraint" aspect ("lerne leiden ohne Klagen") presumably often has a conscious or unconscious demonstrative character; the person "zeigt, dass er im Stillen leidet"; he shows "auffällig verborgenes Leiden" (32).

b. *Beliefs about conditions and consequences of the reaction types.* The images of the "positive" and "negative" performance in a test situation were accompanied by characteristic beliefs about the conditions and the consequences of these performances.

One such belief was that the chances of proper performance in a crisis vary directly with the amount of previous training ("Schulung," "harte Schule") in accepting deprivations. "Hardening" ("Abhärtung," "Ertüchtigung," "Austreibung der Weichheit") was regarded as a major condition of the positive performance; this is related to the emphasis on early discipline making "men" out of boys. There was the stereotype of the hero achieving greatness "under the blows of fate," and conversely, that of the person straying from the right path ("auf die schiefe Ebene geraten") due to unchecked earlier indulgence ("Verwöhnung").

As to the consequences of the two types of performance, the major belief was that the hedonic balance will ultimately correspond to the value of the performance in the critical test situation. In other words, a positive performance no matter how great deprivations it involves, will ultimately be rewarded by indulgences more than compensating for the deprivations; a negative performance—regardless of the momentary relief it may bring—will ultimately result in maximal deprivations, i.e., lastly, total annihilation (in the Nazi phrase: "schwach werden bedeutet Untergang"). These relationships were frequently taken for granted, without detailed explanation. Such beliefs are presumably related to omnipotence phantasies on the one hand, and to the unconscious parental significance of the external agencies determining the hedonic balance on the other: the parents will cease meting out punishment only if the child obeys parental injunctions.

A closely related belief was that the acceptance—in the vein of a price paid—of a certain amount of deprivations is a necessary (or: sufficient) condition for the attainment of a proportionate amount of indulgences (cf. the stereotypes "Preussen hat sich grossgehungert"; "es wird einem nichts geschenkt").

c. *The Manipulation of "Zusammenbruch."* Guilt and anxiety concerning a "collapse" (e.g., military surrender) frequently lead to the use of a number of devices which are analogous to those utilized to combat

guilt about acts of aggression (cf. Chapter 7). Thus, one encounters denials, displacements of responsibility and justifications. The following devices used in connection with military desertion and surrender may be mentioned here:

In many cases in the Second World War, German soldiers who deserted and surrendered to the enemy arranged circumstances so that it could appear to others as well as to themselves as if they had been captured against their own will. Even when there was successful self-deception, awareness of what had really happened presumably remained on deeper levels. In cases where the nature of the act committed was not concealed in consciousness, euphemistic terms were usually preferred to blunt ones (such as "Überlaufen"), which were tensely avoided.

Where surrender as such was not denied, guilt and anxiety were frequently reduced by the use of "regular" forms for this irregular content. Thus collective and "organized" surrender was vastly preferred to individual acts. The individual's responsibility was thus diminished.

Surrender was often excused as legitimate according to accepted military standards, e.g., the enemy was "overwhelmingly superior"; but such standard behavior often showed characteristic nuances. Thus the enemy was sometimes asked to stage a token battle (or a demonstration of his forces) "proving" that further resistance would indeed be useless.

A typical excuse was that the "load" of the situation had become "unbearable," i.e., that the subject was prevented by physiological factors, or something akin to them, from continuing to resist. "Nervous breakdown" (Versagen der Nerven, die Nerven verlieren, uebermässige Nervenbelastung, etc.) and "complete exhaustion" were the typical physiological reasons given for one's "collapse," for which one is not responsible as they are forces majeures. (The excuse was less strong than that of hopeless military inferiority; it was not "honorable" to yield to a "Nervenzusammenbruch," but just barely excusable. A "hero" would not succumb to it. Hitler once said in this sense: "Der deutsche Soldat hat keine Nerven." German medical officers in general were reluctant to recognize "battle fatigue" and similar conditions as legitimate diseases, but they more easily accepted as bona fide maladies those cases in which psychogenic symptoms had a prominent somatic facade. Transfer of allegiance from one authority to another was also often justified by the generally "unbearable" character of the situation. Typical expressions used in this context were: "Es kann so nicht mehr weitergehen," "es muss anders werden." These stock phrases accompanied the decline and fall of the Weimar republic; and of the Nazi regime.

## 2. *The Ascetic Syndrom*

We shall now deal with the acceptance of, or rebellion against, deprivations imposed by an accepted authority on the subject where such deprivations are not taken to be conditioned by resistance to an external enemy. (Deprivations were sometimes ascribed to non-human, supernatural factors such as Providence or The Moral Law; these factors, then, play a rôle analogous to that of the accepted authority.)

In this connection, too, we may speak of a "positive" and "negative" performance. The "positive" performance consists in the loyal ("voluntary") acceptance of the deprivation demanded by the authority; the "negative" performance consists in withholding allegiance from the authority unless the demand for deprivations is withdrawn (or the individual's demand for indulgences is granted).

The positive performance is, as already stated, essentially a "voluntary" one; the deprivation is to be accepted with "inner approval," not only in cases where the same deprivation is imposed upon all members of the group in the common interest or as a matter of discipline, but also when the individual is unfavorably singled out. There was, as is well known, a high incidence of such acts of "inner approval" in German culture. As Das Schwarze Korps wrote on February 10, 1944: "Im allgemeinen klappt der Gerüffelte je nachdem in praxis oder im Geiste die Hacken zusammen."

Particularly when the deprivations involved are ascribed to some metaphysical entity, their acceptance was frequently accompanied by stress on their "necessity" either with resignation ("es ist halt so im Leben," "es ist halt Schicksal," "wir müssen leiden," "man muss sich in das Unabwendbare fügen") or with ostensible approval ("man kann sich eigentlich nicht beklagen"). Approval of punishment by the father and his successors appeared in the frequent retrospective pride and gratification expressed about it in later life. Widespread beliefs regarded these punishments as highly beneficial.

On the other hand, it was widely regarded as illicit (consciously or not) for the individual to address demands to authority asking for the gratification of some "selfish" desire, especially if allegiance was presented as conditional upon the granting of such a request. Presumably, "Marxism" appeared to many non-proletarian Germans as an incitement to these various forbidden attitudes; this in its turn contributed to the intensity of the hostile reactions against it.

Sometimes it was however permissible to approach supernatural authorities with impatient demands for gratification,—cf. the frequent cases in which

Goebbels needed Providence "not to make a fool of herself" by withholding victory from the Germans and thus destroying the meaning of history. There was no odium of a negative performance attached to such entreaties, because "victory" rather than selfish gratification was demanded, and because the fulfilment of duty was not made conditional upon the granting of the request. In a more extreme manifestation of the same tendency fate tended to appear, not only in the rôle of the super-ego to be obeyed, but also in that of an enemy to be overpowered; Baldur von Schirach (German radio, March 12, 1944) exclaimed: "Diesmal werden wir mächtiger sein als das Schicksal"; Ley (in a speech in March, 1944) affirmed "We must march on until we master Fate. Fate we will not try to avoid thee; we will struggle with thee wherever thou chooseth!"

Readiness to accept (and magnify) deprivations decreed by an accepted mundane or supernatural authority was of course fostered by overall positive reactions towards such an authority. Apart from them, certain special factors may be mentioned.

1. The high unconscious guilt level of the compulsive character entails an intense desire for punishment. In compulsive characters, we see "readiness on the part of the ego to take upon itself . . . the punishment demanded of it by the super-ego" (8). Presumably, many deprivations ascribed to metaphysical entities ("Schicksalsschläge") or inflicted by enemies are unconsciously accepted as punishment and therefore accepted with a relative lack of protest.

2. There were in German culture presumably widespread unconscious passive homosexual tendencies—frequently related to mother-identifications and paternal severity in early stages—towards objects of superior power. In such cases, suffering at the hands of these powers may induce unconscious sexual gratification (15). Such suffering may unconsciously signify castration; in the compulsive character, "the fear of castration and the longing to be castrated . . . persist side by side" (8). In other cases, the suffering unconsciously signifies other types of sexualized pain: "In its regressively debased form, the feminine sexual wish of men to cohabit . . . with the father appears as a wish to be . . . tortured by him. In all cases of compulsion neurosis, the gratification of this wish is sought . . . in relation to the super-ego" (8).

Pain taken as being inflicted by an authority was often looked upon as a necessary indicator of the legitimacy of that authority, and also of the fact of being loved by it; hence it was to some extent consciously or unconsciously desired. Thus severity of authority up to a certain (high) degree appeared

more or less consciously as desirable and even indispensable, while too great leniency was frequently reacted to with dismay. "Severe" ("streng") was in general a laudatory term.

3. Severe interference with the one's aggression against authority may result not only in the internalization of that aggression, but also in unconscious desires to become the target of aggression (25).

4. The acceptance of "punishment" is facilitated by an attitude which prefers consummated losses to indefinite threats ("Lieber ein Ende mit Schrecken als ein Schrecken ohne Ende"). Such an attitude appears frequently in compulsive characters.

5. Indulging in gratifications beyond a certain level presumably frequently has an unconscious feminine significance and consequently induces guilt and anxiety (cf. above). One may recall in this connection the important rôle of the mother in German culture in dispensing indulgences in early stages and in particular maternal acts of bestowing illegitimate favors upon the child (e.g., in compensation for paternal punishment which the mother was unable to prevent).

6. High levels of deprivation may consciously or unconsciously promote feelings of self-admiration, self-righteousness and self-pity. The sufferer may be presented as a martyr of his own goodness. A letter written by a German in 1944 raised the typical question: "Muss denn nun einem fleissigen arbeitsamen Volke, dass nur einen Fehler hat und zwar den, dass es zu anständig ist, das Leben so schwer gemacht werden?" Voluntarily accepted deprivations were often said to have benefited others who took advantage of them for imposing further hardships on their benefactors; one may recall the frequent allegations that all great cultural advances are of German origin; that the Germans, however, content themselves with conceiving fundamental ideas and unselfishly leave their practical exploitation to others who despoil and oppress them. The stereotypes of "Weltfremdheit," "reiner Tor," "Idealismus" all illustrate the theme "how good must I be if I have to endure so many unjust injuries." A related stereotype pictured the "man of genius" as being necessarily misunderstood and persecuted by a mediocre and envious environment; the Germans who are essentially "creative" must suffer on this count too. As is well known, there was in German culture "a vast company of neglected geniuses . . . who . . . insist that the hall-mark of genius is to be unrecognized."

7. Deprivations considered as exceptionally high may serve to justify demands for exceptionally high indulgences (or impunity for forbidden acts). Historical phantasies about Germany as a "have-not" nation, and complaints

about the hardships imposed by the Versailles treaty, served to justify colossal pansionist demands. "We cannot go on forever fighting for ideals. In the long run it is rather a sign of kindness than of wisdom when a people plays the cultural fertilizer of the world. We are tired of this rôle. We want to cash in at last" (Goebbels May 29, 1942).

6. Deprivations imposed by the accepted authority may be considered as exorcisms against undesirable tendencies within the self. "God . . . is hammering him (Hitler) daily, so he should be purer and harder, till temptation moves him no more" (the German radio on Hitler's birthday, 1944).

#### E. DESTRUCTIVENESS AND CORRECTNESS

The behavior of the compulsive character is "pervaded by manifestations of . . . sadism or of reaction-formations against sadism" (8). "Overt or concealed tendencies to cruelty, or reaction-formations against them, are . . . findings in all compulsion neuroses" (8). Psychoanalytic observers have called attention to many related traits in compulsive characters: their "meanness" (18), "angry outbursts" and "sullen fractiousness" (18). Freud found them "garrulous," "defiant," and "quaelerisch"; Abraham described them as "malicious" (1). They are "difficult to live with" (18). All this indicates a high propensity to unprovoked aggressiveness, manifested either directly or by hostile attitudes such as "Schadenfreude." Besides such "gratuitous" aggressiveness, one also finds a high degree of vindictiveness, which was noted by Freud. "The desire for revenge . . . is . . . in many people of this type . . . developed to an extraordinary extent" (18).

Aggressive behavior in compulsive characters is related to a variety of factors, of which the following may be mentioned:

1. Fixations on, and regressions to, early tendencies to destroy objects by anal expulsion.

2. Intense urges toward domination.

3. Reaction-formations against "passive," "feminine" (homosexual) tendencies in males. Aggressiveness may in such contexts have the significance of counteracting fears of being "yellow." One of the major types of highly destructive Nazi activist was the "elegant pansy."

4. Aggressive tendencies may aim at executing, reinforcing, and demonstrating identification with the patriarchal father. The high intensity of this identification may in turn be a defense against a high intensity of positive oedipal tendencies directed towards the mother. Another major type of destructive Nazi activist was the "baby face" type.

This variety, as well as the preceding one, is accompanied by the concep-

tion that aggression is desirable as "manly" and "strong," as against "weak" and "feminine" non-aggressiveness. In this context, aggressiveness may achieve the status of norm-fulfilment.

5. Intense aggressive tendencies tend to result from high balances of deprivations over indulgences in early life.

6. Aggressive tendencies may aim at counteracting the person's feeling of not being "real."

7. Aggressive tendencies may aim at undoing past failures of aggressive moves. Undoing, it may be recalled, is a characteristic mechanism in the compulsive personality.

8. Aggressive tendencies may operate to alleviate anxiety and guilt accompanying doubts as to whether one has performed correctly.

9. Aggressive tendencies accompany compulsive "orderliness" and "purity" strivings in the face of targets presented as affected by disorder and dirt. According to the general hypothesis proposed in this study, aggressive tendencies associated with the compulsive character were frequent in German culture (though doubtlessly to considerably differing degrees among different groups), while at the same time their completion against a large number of objects was severely interfered with by the norm-system on which life was oriented. The aggression pent up under the impact of the restraining norms was, however, released in their "interstices."

Open aggression was mostly found in three types of situations. Firstly, in characteristic outbreaks of rage (Jachzorn) E. Diesel (6) speaks of a German "nervous excitability." Secondly, where aggression could be construed as counter-aggression, e.g., when a person usually protected by restraining norms had committed an offence. Thirdly, against individuals and groups not protected by restraining norms, i.e., "enemies."

The first type of aggression is not calculated by the aggressor; the fit of rage seizes him more or less "against his own will," breaking down his usual control. In the second type one often has the impression that the individual has been more or less consciously waiting for an opportunity to commit aggression. Certain characteristic German expressions have an undertone of long pent up expectation: "Na, dem werd ich's aber zeigen! Den werden wir uns mal vornehmen!"

The third type of aggression was not merely "excusable," as a fit of rage was and not merely "justified" as counter-aggression against an offending member of the in-group was. It was not only institutionalized as elsewhere in Western culture, but also endowed with much prestige of norm-fulfilment, as is well known. Particularly in this type of aggression, but also in the



first two types mentioned, the psychic emphasis was on the act of aggression rather than on its target which was widely interchangeable.

German language showed an important rôle of aggression terms, such as "jemandem auf die Füße treten," "einen Fusstritt geben," "in die Fresse hauen," "vor den Kopf stossen," "auf Biegen und Brechen," "über den Haufen werfen," "auf die Knie zwingen," "rücksichtslos durchgreifen," and, in general, the prominent use of the verb "schlagen" (oder "hauen"), in expressions such as "auf den Kopf schlagen," "sich verhauen," and in compounds such as the Nazi term "schlagartig." Certain other widely used expressions characterized the "electrically charged" social atmosphere, such as "Krach," "Mord und Totschlag."

Images of the enemy (within and outside of the culture), especially the images proposed by the Nazis, contained a large number of terms denoting an aggression extreme in its methods and effects. Various kinds of political language were full of expressions such as "Vernichtungswille," "Zerstörungswut," "Mordbrenner," "Bartholomäusnacht," "in Grund und Boden vernichten." (Such extreme charges, against enemies, of course, were often projections of aggressive tendencies of the self.)

When speaking of himself, the individual often admitted or alleged "uncontrollable" rage ("rasende Wut"); one may recall the use of the verb "rasen" (instead of "laufen") in the Hitler Youth. But it is decisive to note that such an individual may be subject to "uncontrollable" rage when dealing with an inferior (or equal) in status; when the offender is a superior, he will rather spontaneously "control" himself. This selection of targets of completed aggression is characteristic of the personality structure here described. It can be in part understood if we remember that in early stages of the life history of individuals of this character type intense aggressive tendencies against powerful father objects have been severely interfered with. As a result, aggression tendencies in later life will be restrained or completed according to whether the power imputed to the prospective object of aggression is high or low. (Aggression out of "manliness" aspirations also often requires the certainty of success, i.e., a weak adversary, although not without qualifications.) Thus the consciousness of power of a subject of this type may come to depend on the range and effect of his completed acts of aggression, and on the anxiety levels of others concerning his future aggressions.

Although it is impossible at present to give an exact survey of acts of aggression in German culture, whereby the proportion of completed acts of aggression against relatively powerless and relatively powerful targets could

be ascertained, it seems to be safe to assume, on the basis of the available "impressionistic" evidence, the completed acts of aggression against relatively powerless objects were far more frequent. The behavior of Nazis, at any rate, showed this characteristic to an extraordinary degree: they were always careful to attack only their enemies after having isolated them, and, in general, to attack only without deliberately taking chances. *SS* practices apparently included violence against unduly exhausted members; and a major Nazi type of junior officer, the "Pimpf" or "Bubi" type, as he was designated by his victims in the Wehrmacht, closely approximated the "bully-coward" stereotype. It may be assumed that this pattern of distribution of aggressive acts was also highly diffused in pre-Nazi German culture, although not carried to such lengths as under Nazism.

Among the implications of this pattern is the "insatiability" of aggression: as each successful aggression diminishes the power of the target, it increases the probability of subsequent acts of aggression against it. Another implication is the absence, or out-and-out rejection, of "fair play" ideologies, to the extent that the aggression pattern in question enters consciousness. Those ideologies tend to be replaced by maxims of the "Wer fällt, den soll man auch noch stossen" type. Many German soldiers of the Second World War showed a conscious preference for wars against weak opponents, and justified Nazi war policy—or sometimes even German atrocities committed in the East—by the initially plausible under-estimation of enemy power. (This type of justification co-existed with the more usual one according to which Germany was "forced" to go to war.) On the other hand, Nazi propaganda often pretended to criticize Germans for their excessive adherence to fair play; the Nazi front newspaper *Die Südfront*, January 18, 1944, complained about the German "Nationalübel, grundsätzlich für den Schwächeren Partei zu ergreifen." Such grossly false assertions were probably made in the conscious or unconscious intention to alleviate guilt about aggressiveness.

The character type which displays this pattern of aggression also tends to show a similar distribution of positive and negative emotional and value attitudes towards objects; that is to say, objects which are deemed powerful tend to be loved, and positively valued, while objects deemed powerless tend to be hated and negatively valued. (Correspondingly, a gain of power will be accompanied by strengthened love impulses; a loss of power will elicit, or intensify, hate impulses.) It is especially characteristic of this type that moral valuations follow the same pattern: the powerful object is morally good, the weak one, morally bad.

A paradoxical situation may arise if a subject of this type suffers severe

deprivations at the hands of a powerful enemy, so that he is led to acknowledge his own weakness and the enemy's strength. In view of the above pattern, the subject may then show a tendency to love the enemy and hate himself. German morale, and loyalty to Nazism, in the Second War was threatened by this type of situation.

By virtue of the same pattern, the character type in question will tend to interpret any concession made by an adversary and his reliance on non-violent techniques (e.g., negotiation) as signs of weakness, and hence react to them with increased aggressiveness. This point has often been made in connection with certain ill-fated attempts at "appeasement."

The compulsive character tends to project on to others the relationship between power and aggression specific to himself; hence he often underestimates the magnitude of the counter-aggression he will arouse against himself. Since he might not stand up against someone whom he deems decisively more powerful than himself, and also tends to take manifestations of violence as indicators of power, he tends to exaggerate the effects of threats and acts of violence on certain other character types. This type of mistake has repeatedly proved the undoing of policies of Germany's rulers. Certain techniques of intimidation which were successful in German culture often boomeranged when applied elsewhere.

#### F. FRICTIONS AND COMRADESHIP

While aggression against higher placed objects was severely interfered with in German culture, there was a fair amount of completed aggression against objects on the same status level, and of course still more against objects on lower levels. Interfered with aggressive tendencies directed against "higher" objects were presumably in part displaced towards objects on one's own or on a lower level. Among other factors contributing to this situation the following may be mentioned: a high degree of hostility among subjects of a given authority is often related to the prevalence of identification-by-anxiety between the subjects and this authority. Thus, in adolescent school classes identifying with tyrannical teachers, "the emotional relations these youngsters develop among themselves seem less intensive (than in classes with other types of teachers). . . . Children of such classes develop little comradeship . . . they seem to be afraid of each other and distrustful" (28).

There is in German culture much awareness and apprehension of non-cooperativeness and of friction ("Krach") in daily life contacts, which are apt to be "charged with electricity," especially in deprivational conditions. Destructive intentions are (in part, presumably, projectively) attributed

to many harmless acts of the environment: "If one treads on a German's foot by mistake, all manner of polite formalities are expected of one" (6). In connection with such expectations of interpersonal friction there are widespread and intense desires for undisturbed privacy ("Ruhe und Frieden").

"Correct" behavior is, of course, demanded, but "correctness" gives way, as it were, under high pressure. Behavior frequently seems to oscillate between the poles of complete (and somewhat impersonal) correctness on the one hand, and sudden unrestrained outbreaks ("Jähzorn") on the other. This may be more or less consciously accompanied by guilt-alleviating beliefs such as "I was utterly correct as long as I could control myself, but now this is no longer possible; the measure is full, I can't answer for my acts any more."

In dealing with subordinates, loud eruptions ("schimpfen," "anhauchen") were widely considered normal.

Besides outbreaks of "Jähzorn," aggression against objects of one's own status manifests itself in many forms. In Germany "social intercourse does not run smoothly and easily" (6); the German has a "tendency to make trouble with his fellowmen" (6); "Germans show great patience . . . in submitting to rules . . . but . . . little patience in dealing with their fellowmen" (6). There is a characteristic concern with "Höflichkeit,"—"Unhöflichkeit," "rücksichtslos sein,"—"Rücksicht nehmen." A few illustrative instances may be recalled. According to observers of Wehrmacht mores in the Second World War, the level of mutual undermining and of demonstrative non-coöperation in upper levels was significantly high. In civilian life, unusually high irritability, released by wartime conditions, constituted a major problem during the Second World War (20). There were frequent comments on this in Nazi newspapers, such as the following: "We still consume more nervous energy in our contacts with each other over trifles, and through unnecessary friction, than through enemy action . . ." (*Westdeutscher Beobachter*, April 6, 1944). "Ugly, rude behavior, such as we are experiencing now after nearly every concert and theatrical performance . . ." (*NS Zeitung Westmark*, February 25, 1944). "How carefully people used to avoid touching on anything that might be disagreeable to others! But today we are doing exactly the opposite. We are seeking opportunities of mentioning something which upsets or annoys others" (*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 2, 1944). "What would happen in our congested areas if everyone . . . showed and told the other how he

feels about him? There would be murder, manslaughter, and wholesale actions for defamation" (Bodensee-Rundschau, March 15, 1944).

But these were not entirely war phenomena. In the words of E. Diesel, a typical conversational tone in Germany is "loud and brusque" (6); "conversation in Germany is often made difficult . . . by impatience in the listener" (6), "nowhere in the world is so much arguing . . . to be found" (6) (a complement to the well known blind obedience pattern towards superiors).

As for the centers of conflict, one involved the usually intense demand that deprivations borne on behalf of the group be equally shared by all members of the group with minute precision. This is presumably partially related to the following usually unconscious motivation: "If a group member sacrifices less than I, and gets away with it, he is more successful in his aggressive acts against authority than I have been. He thereby stimulates my aggressive tendencies towards authority, and thereby my anxiety and guilt. He also induces me to turn aggressively against myself for having been a sucker, and having appeared to him as one." (Goebbels wrote in *Das Reich*, August 13, 1944: "We are all ready to make even the heaviest sacrifices. But we do not like to be dupes and cut a ridiculous figure in the eyes of those who know how to keep within bounds their zeal for sacrifices.") The aggressive nuance of the demand for equality-in-deprivations is more manifest when euphoria is felt about deprivations by an enemy being widely diffused. Letters of Second World War civilian air raid victims not infrequently contained, implicitly or explicitly, the idea: "Nur gut dass jeder jetzt leiden muss"; Nazi propaganda tried to capitalize upon this source of gratification by stressing the socially equalizing impact of air raids.

Another center of aggressive acts among persons of equal status concerns acts which the subject characterizes as "meddling" with his affairs. To high tolerance of interference from above corresponds low tolerance of interference originating elsewhere. The intensity of the rejection of such interference is matched by the subject's readiness to interfere with others; one may recall the diffusion of "meddlesomeness" (as to extent) and "tactlessness" (as to form) in criticizing others.

Both the defense against outside interference and the interference with others are satisfied in certain situations in which the person insists on the full utilization of his "rights" regardless of the impact on others—i.e., unconsciously often with a view to the deprivational impact on others. Thus "few Germans will surrender their right to smoke on the platform of a

tram even (sic) when they are aware that they are making a nuisance of themselves" (6).

Furthermore, there is a well known tendency towards lack of solidarity with fellowmen in distress. Civilian behavior in Second World War air raids apparently showed a high incidence of "sauve qui peut" and spectator attitudes. Similarly "willingness to help in the little difficulties of life is not felt in Germany to be a matter of course" (6).

Non-solidarity is also much shown vis-a-vis the relations of fellow subjects to authority. There is the well known tendency towards gloating (Schadenfreude) when authority—whether human or metaphysical, such as "fate"—inflicts a deprivation upon somebody else of one's level. Sometimes, the deprivations inflicted by authority are duplicated by persons of the same status as the object involved; e.g., soldiers who received a punishment were often bullied by their comrades. This is of course related to the regularities of the distribution of aggression.

Furthermore, people who had been punished frequently attempted to induce authority also to punish other members of their particular group. An American who exercised judiciary authority in Germany in 1918-19 as an *AEF* officer writes: "If a man was convicted of anything, he would . . . proceed to give me the names of others who had committed the same misdemeanor. . . . I don't remember any case of . . . denunciation before a trial, but they never failed to appear after conviction" (2).

In addition, there is a tendency readily to invoke sanctions of authority ("sich beschweren") in minor conflicts.

Tendencies towards generalized warfare within the group ("Kampf aller gegen alle" is an expression with significant emotional aura in German culture) are opposed by various reaction-formations. These ranged from "the somewhat forced politeness of the German" (6) to intense "comradeship," in conformity with one of the typical origins of latent homosexuality. As one would expect, "comradeship" relations showed high dependence on the availability of targets of aggression outside the group of those eligible as "comrades"; the prototype of such relationships was thus that between front soldiers.

Similarly, positive reactions to persons of one's own status showed in general a high dependence on the presence of an organizational frame: "The German needs the . . . society (Verein) to help him along in his dealings with his fellowmen" (6). In such organizational contexts "comradely" behavior may often be enjoined by explicit norms indicating its partially reaction-formative character.

Comradeship reactions may contain—usually with little conscious awareness—an element of hostility towards authority. One “loyal” German prisoner in the Second World War said: “Wir kämpften alle so tapfer zusammen—schade dass wir nicht alle zusammen gefangen wurden.”

### G. GUILT AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

A high level of guilt feelings (mostly unconscious) is characteristic of the compulsive type. Freud speaks of the “guilt feelings of compulsion neurotics.” “Compulsive characters always show a prominent propensity to guilt reactions” (29). This, of course, is related to their severe super-ego; there is in such characters a “continuous censorial attention . . . directed to the person’s self” (8). The severity of the super-ego is in its turn related to a number of factors, such as the intensity of the person’s aggressive tendencies, which have to be kept in check or are redirected against the self. High guilt may also arise through the incorporation of parental imputations of naughtiness to the self. But to the extent to which the super-ego is reprojected outside of the self, “guilt” is replaced by “social anxiety”—a very important phenomenon in German culture.

The compulsive character typically resorts to a number of defenses against his guilt feelings. There are simple denials of having committed forbidden acts, re-interpretations and euphemisms. Compulsive rituals may be described as “the ensemble of conditions under which something not absolutely forbidden is permitted.” In another type of anti-guilt defense, certain acts running counter to the super-ego become emotionally neutral in consciousness. “Even where repression has not encroached upon the content of the aggressive impulse, it has . . . abolished its . . . affective quality.” “Obsessive impulses to kill . . . appear stripped of their appropriate emotional quality” (8). The compulsive character “cannot hate adequately” (29) although he may try to be “hasserfüllt.” In addition, manifold kinds of justification are invoked to silence guilt.

Direct expressions of guilt were frequently encountered in German culture. The Lutheran emphasis on human sinfulness (man as “Sündenkrüppel”) appeared, in a secularized form, in certain traditional doctrines permeating army and school life; cf. the stereotyped references to the “innerer Schweinehund” (“innere Biesternis”). That man was prominently felt to be “laden with guilt” also appears from certain uses of the adjective “menschlich” (cf. Nietzsche’s “Menschliches—Allzumenschliches” which became proverbial).

Guilt, however, was betrayed more by indirect than direct manifestations. One of the most important indirect manifestations of guilt was a certain

complex of attitudes toward deprivations; this is discussed in more detail in Section D. In this chapter, another type of indirect manifestation of guilt shall be discussed, namely the system of defenses against guilt in German culture. This shall be done with special reference to guilt about aggressive tendencies. The discussion, however, will be largely applicable to other types of guilt.

In one group of anti-guilt defenses aggression was *denied*. (It may be noted that denials sometimes serve as a conscious or unconscious undoing of the action denied; undoing is, of course, one of the characteristic mechanisms of the compulsive character.) The denial of aggression occurred in a variety of typical forms in German culture; it was characteristic of them that the denial seldom took the form of an out-and-out false fact statement.

There was the technique of denying aggression by avoiding mention of unpalatable facts, particularly in such "potent" media as official records. Thus, the Nazis took great care to avoid public mention of the atrocities committed by them. Some discreditable events, such as the Reichstag fire and especially the purge of June 30, 1934, had to be mentioned publicly when they occurred; but soon thereafter any public reference to them was practically banned.

A frequently used guilt-alleviating symbolic device was the euphemism ("So etwas tut man, aber sagt man nicht"). The effectiveness of this technique in lessening guilt may be partly explained by the high importance of words for compulsive characters; hence the relative ease with which something which is not called by its appropriate name may be reacted to as something different from what it is. Military observers have noted the differential importance of camouflage words in the German military vocabulary of the Second World War. Terms compounded with "Wehr" ("Wehrwille," "Wehrfreude," "Wehrhaft") were prominent; the syllable "wehr-" suggests armed *defense*, but the connotation is clearly any fighting. Characteristic, though superficial, colloquial euphemisms used in announcing aggressive intent were: "Er wird an mir noch seine Freude (sein blaues Wunder) erleben," and the like. High affect was not infrequently elicited by outspoken references to aggressive acts. An article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in 1944 expressed dismay and amazement over the picture of a U. S. soldier in battle dress which appeared in an American magazine with the caption "Dressed to kill." The double-sense obviously escaped the Nazi writer who merely noticed the overt reference to "killing." Nazi (as well as pre-Nazi German nationalist) propaganda of course always stressed the central place of soldiering in the life of the young male, but was usually careful to



present this activity with appropriate euphemisms. On the other hand when the use of euphemisms was abandoned, one encountered—in the omnipresent polarization pattern—frequently “orgies” of frankness about aggression.

Another typical defense against guilt consisted in the deliberate avoidance of contact with facts which revealed aggressiveness in the group to which the self belonged. “To close one’s eyes and ears” was a characteristic expression denoting this practice. Very many Germans indulged in this practice with regard to the systematic mass cruelties committed in the Third Reich. According to certain observers, many German soldiers in the Second World War showed a marked preference for a long-distance as against close-range fighting, (as the consciousness of killing was easier to exclude from the former). On the other hand, the opposite tendency broke through with a vengeance in situations too well known to need elaboration here. Reactions to the sight of death and wounds apparently tended to be very intense (if not superseded by anesthesia).

Instances of anti-guilt defense by the elimination from consciousness of the appropriate emotional coloring of acts of aggression also seem to have been frequent in German culture. Certain aspects of mass annihilations under the Nazi regime were carried out in a routine way, with a minimum of spontaneous acts; this device was presumably used to diminish the impact of guilt (among other motives). In general, aggressive tendencies were regularly conducted into organized military or paramilitary channels, so that the “warm” conscious gratification accompanying spontaneous acts of aggression was to some extent eliminated. (The soldier only “carries out orders” but does not “hate” the enemy.)

Another set of anti-guilt defenses denied the individual’s or the group’s moral responsibility for acts of aggression, rather than these acts themselves. Thus, individuals aware of acts of aggression committed by themselves frequently believed in mere “negligence” or “vis major.” Or the “I” was linguistically separated from the deed committed, e.g., by using passive instead of active forms of verbs referring to one’s aggressive acts. Furthermore, there was a pronounced tendency to shift the responsibility on to superiors; simple soldiers, for instance, almost always merely “carried out orders,” and often avoided stating whether these orders coincided with their own wishes, rather treating them as “givens” not subject to their evaluation. This partly explains the strong appeal which the idea of “leadership” had for a substantial part of the German population: the “leader” takes upon himself all responsibility for aggression, in which the individual can then

indulge with less guilt. Responsibility was furthermore often waived by recurring to flimsy legal facades—a trait which is related to the high “formalism” of the compulsive super-ego. The belief in some internal compulsion was also frequently used (“I could not act otherwise”; “die Härte die wir haben zeigen müssen”). The individual may be presented as the mere executor of the will of metaphysical entities. Goebbels wrote of the “sachlich zwingende Korrektur unseres oestlichen Besitzstandes” (*Das Reich*, March 10, 1944), in justifying the Eastern aggressions of the Nazis.

For acts of aggression committed by other members of the group related techniques existed whereby the individual could waive responsibility. Characteristic expressions for these tendencies are: “seine Hände in Unschuld waschen,” “ich kann nichts dafür,” “ich habe nichts damit zu tun gehabt,” “mein Name ist Hase, ich weiss von nichts.” During the Second World War, German soldiers regularly disclaimed not only participation in, but also any moral responsibility for, acts of atrocity, rather naming special units (the SS or its Sicherheitsdienst) as the culprits. Simple soldiers, of course, also put the blame on their superiors, while higher officers blamed either subordinate officers or Supreme Headquarters.

A third major category of anti-guilt defenses (besides denials of facts, and waiving of responsibility for them) consisted in moral justifications of the aggression. Authorities regularly devoted extraordinary attention to this. Public life tended to be permeated by a strained, extreme self-righteousness (reaction-formative to guilt and hence by no means secure, so that endless, explicit repetition of arguments became necessary). In the usual polarized fashion this high concern with self-justification tended to be accompanied by conscious “nihilism” and “Skrupellosigkeit” e.g., among young Nazi groups.

Between these two extremes there was a rising trend of avoiding the whole issue in consciousness by abstaining from any moral evaluations of events whatsoever, concentrating rather on the facts themselves, their probable conditions and consequences (hence their expediency for given aims). This applied even to extraordinary deprivations inflicted on the self by an enemy. There was little spontaneous indignation and hate directed by German Second World War civilians against the Allied air war over Germany; they were largely reacted to as “Naturkatastrophen” and with “C'est la guerre” attitudes. (To some extent this was caused by largely unconscious guilt about “Germany having begun.”) Similarly, forecasts of “annihilation” in case of German defeat were usually accepted with apprehension rather than hate or indignation. (Such forecasts were frequently,

consciously or unconsciously, forecasts of retaliation.) Nazi propaganda 1943-1944 launched the slogan of "Vergeltung" with the emphasis on punishment and revenge; but popular usage shifted the focus of the term's meaning to the stopping of Allied air raids and to a general amelioration of Germany's military position. In a similar fashion the officially sponsored term "Terrorangriff" came simply to mean "Allied air raid."

The publicly prevalent ideologies about aggression were elaborately norm-oriented rather than cynical. Thus, the argument that aggression is a part of "human nature" played a far smaller rôle in Nazi ideology than the "preventive aggression" argument: if one had not resorted to aggression, one would have been wiped out altogether. The alleged total danger justifies any amount of aggression; it creates an extraordinary situation in which ordinary ethical rules are suspended: "Not kennt kein Gebot." It is in order to defend one's "most sacred rights," or to fulfill a mission bestowed upon oneself by Providence, that one has taken up arms. (Even the above mentioned "cynical" argument often appeared in a way "moralized": since international relations are necessarily governed by armed might alone, it is one's supreme duty always to be ready for a trial of strength). The "preventive aggression" argument, of course, transformed aggression into counter-aggression. K. Kraus spoke in this sense of the "verfolgende Unschuld." Guilt feelings about aggression are thereby diminished in two ways: the alleged aggression against the self is expiatory as well as justificatory of one's own aggression.

Another major justification presented aggression as occurring in the teeth of an alleged excessive softness of the self. The image of the "braver deutscher Michel" served this purpose. Frequently the alleged counter-aggression resorted to by Germany was described as "too late and too little," e.g., when Hitler spoke of his "angelic patience" or when German soldiers during World War II declared that the trouble with Germany's handling of European peoples was "das wir zu gutherzig sind." The fear of being prevailed upon if one is not aggressive enough was widespread in German culture; one may recall the cliché "wenn man Dir Deine Anständigkeit als Dummheit und Schwäche auslegt, dann auftrumpfen. . . ."

The following passage from *Das Schwarze Korps* (May, 1944) illustrates some of the above-mentioned anti-guilt defenses: "Wir dürfen nicht glauben, dass im Wirtshaus des Lebens Ruhe und Frieden sein wird, nur weil wir sittsam und brav unser Stammgericht verzehren. Da müssen wir schon die Hemdsärmel aufkrempeln und uns diese Ruhe verschaffen. Deshalb brauchen wir doch keine Schlagetöter und Raufbolde zu sein. Wir sprechen

ja auch nicht von einer 'Kriegsmacht,' sondern von einer 'Wehrmacht.' Sich wehren, das ist es! Sich wehren gegen das Gesindel der Welt. . . ."

One of the characteristic features of the alleged counter-aggression against an alleged aggression against the self was that it did not need to be proportionate to that aggression but could reach very high degrees of intensity: the absolution once given covered vast lengths to which one could go in taking "reprisals." To a wrong, no matter what its extent was, any degree of hostile reaction was appropriate. This disproportion between the slight suffered, and the reaction aroused (whether completed or not) is characteristic of the compulsive character. To very many World War II German soldiers the killing of proportionately very large numbers of hostages appeared as justified if certain "legal" forms were observed, while the "illegal" acts of aggression which released these reprisals were indignantly condemned ("das ist doch reiner Mord"). When a German army unit in Italy in 1944 felt discriminated against, in the way usual in all armies, the following (non-political) "Gruppenlied" was adopted:

"Einst kommt der Tag der Rache,  
Einmal werden wir frei.  
Stosstrupp 13 erwache,  
Reiss deine Ketten entzwei."

Frequently, there was no recognition of the fact that the aggression against the self (which releases the self's full aggressiveness) was in itself a response to prior aggression by the self. Reactions then conformed to the type of "cet animal est très méchant; quand on l'attaque il se défend."

Further major justifications of aggression referred to its high indispensability and effectiveness in bringing about some desired end. "Ruthlessness" was often affirmed to be the only means for getting results (cf. the positive Nazi use of the term "brutal"). A typical example is furnished by *Das Schwarze Korps* of February 24, 1944, discussing a domestic measure (emergency housing) in the following terms: ". . . dass das grosse Werk nur gelingen kann, wenn alle denkbaren Hemmungen . . . fallen. Hier gilt allein das Zupacken . . . Man wird . . . alle Hindernisse niederreiten, die sich dem Gedanken vollendet reiner Zweckmässigkeit in den Weg stellen Könnten." This corresponds to the typical compulsive belief that while "extreme" means are necessarily completely successful, even the smallest deviation from the extreme procedure would mean complete failure.

The extreme tendency of subordinating means to ends (partly with a bravado born of guilt) found, of course, its complementation in certain philo-

sophical trends of German culture rejecting any such subordination whatsoever.

Aggression in German culture was, of course, frequently justified as in other western cultures, as a means of accomplishing a moral end. Typical elaborations of this theme were related, among other factors, to the projection of "bad" aspects of the self onto the world and to the domination and destruction aspects of compulsive orderliness. The targets could be criminals or "Unbelehrbare" to be punished (*das Gesindel der Welt*), or elements of disorder and dirt to be eliminated ("*reinen Tisch machen*"). There was presumably an important phantasy of creating a *tabula rasa* by total destruction; allegedly younger Nazi elite members in the last pre-1939 years were deeply impressed by an apocryphal saying attributed to Marshall Tukhatchevsky: "The world must become naked again." Beliefs that aggression was demanded by a "higher" end were strengthened by self-estimates (as in the case of "insufficient" counter-aggression, see above) that one is "too bad at hating" and "too prone to excuse others while finding fault with oneself."

Finally, justification of one's acts of aggression was sought in an alleged consensus absolving those acts or in the fact of their being widely committed, particularly in the fact of their already having been committed previous to one's own crime ("*Hannemann, geh Du voran*"). One may recall frequent references to the British Empire having been created by acts exactly similar to those for which Germany was blamed. Such an intense need for obtaining external approval for guilty acts is typical of the compulsive character (8). Alleviation of guilt by reference to "higher authorities" (cf. above) is related to this need for approval.

*(To be continued)*

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